

land section of the Empire Forestry Association. One of the sessions of the Conference was held at Imbil, adjacent to the great Brooloo State Forest, about 100 miles north of Brisbane, and at that gathering instructive reference to birds was made by Mr. W. R. Petrie, deputy forester and capable bush naturalist. In the course of "Some Notes on Problems of Silviculture in Queensland," Mr. Petrie stated: "The harm done by insects can I am convinced, be controlled by increasing our bird life: the Scrub Turkey not only destroys the casual cockchafer beetle and larva by eating, but prevents immense numbers from doing harm by supplying conditions which induce them to congregate in huge nests to be eaten later. This bird is accused of preventing hoop pine regeneration by scratching, but as its most drastic scratchings (to form its huge nest) are not commenced for six or seven months after hoop pine seed-fall, and discontinued long before the next fall, I think that more good than harm is done by giving the seed a better chance of coming in contact with the mineral soil."

A. H. CHISHOLM,

State Secretary.

Stray Feathers

Bird Territories.—In *The Emu* for April, 1922 (vol. xxi., part 4, pages 258-9, Mr. Charles Barrett states that, in studying the Warblers, Eliot Howard "became aware of the fact that each male isolates itself at the commencement of the breeding season, and exercises dominion over a restricted area of ground." "Here" Mr. Barrett interpolates, "is an untilled field for Australian observers." Also, quoting again from Eliot Howard, "Often enough the males fight after they have mated, or a male with a nest building may attack an unmated bird which ventures into his territory. The evidence in support of the theory of territory in bird life is lucidly discussed in Eliot Howard's work."

I dealt with the subject of bird territories in the story of the Blue Wren, or Superb Warbler, in my book, "Friends and Foes in the Australian Bush," published in London and Australia by Messrs. Whitcombe and Tombs in 1914. The story was first published in *The Sydney Mail* in 1911, and reappears in "Spotty the Bower Bird" published last year. I have not seen Eliot Howard's book, but believe that it was published only recently.

When following this matter, many years ago, I found that even Crows hunted over restricted areas. One marked bird I had under observation in the north-west corner of New South Wales led to the discovery of a roosting tree. The marked Crow was always with one small company, and that company roosted every night in one particular tree, though there were hundreds of similar trees about. The birds hunted over miles of country

through the day, but always made home at night. Some of the members at times did not reach the roost tree till a good while after nightfall. The benighted ones called frequently on their homeward flight, and were answered by those that were already home. Other birds have special roost trees as well as Crows.

Every squattage homestead in the back country has its own flock of Crows. Individual members sometimes become so well known to stockmen that they are known as Joe and Jerry, and so on. I have often seen a small company, or a couple, chasing another Crow through the air, evidently an intruder. But when a dead beast was discovered, Crows were called to the feast from every point of the compass. When the banquet was over, generally about sunset, each group departed the way it came. Some of these groups, after a late meal, travelled twenty miles or more to their home camp. In the open western regions, where their flight can be followed for miles, and many camping places are known, their movements are easily noted.—E. S. SORENSON, R.A.O.U., 104 Sydenham Road, Marrickville, N.S.W.

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Owl Calls.—While reading lately an anonymous article in an English journal on "Spring's First Footfall," I was interested in this part: "The sibilant note of the Barn-Owl, the sad cry of the Wood-Owl, the *cat-call* of the Little Owl," because our small Spotted Owl of Tasmania has at times, when excited, a note just like the mewling of a cat. Are these "cat-calls" characteristic of the small Owls all the world over? The Spotted Owl (*Ninox nova-zealandia*) is fairly plentiful in my locality, which is well-timbered, and I often hear him at night through the open window; he frequently announces his approach by a series of calls, "Ohhh! Ohhh! Ohhh! Ohhh!" like a person much surprised or shocked. One summer night a pair came into a gum just back of the cottage, and apparently sat close together on one of the branches. He called, "More-pork" rapidly about sixty times in succession, but in a somewhat subdued tone, while she kept up a sort of droning accompaniment. This little insight into Owl courtship was rather entertaining, although too brief. Not long ago I saw it stated in an Australian paper that no bird calls "Morepork!" but that the call should be represented as "Morepoke!" or "Boobook!" This is a mistake as far as our island is concerned, for the Spotted Owl says "Morepork!" as plainly as a human being could pronounce the words.—H. STUART DOVE, F.Z.S., R.A.O.U., Tasmania.

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The Birds and the Crops.—A Story of the Egret in Egypt.—Did you ever hear the story of how Major S. S. Flower, director of the Egyptian Zoological Service, saved the beautiful